

# THE FABULOUS LAND WHERE PLAY FOLK PASS THE SUMMER.

BY ALAN DALE

ACTORS and actresses are the most advertised people on the face of the earth. So thoroughly saturated are they with the attention bestowed upon them during their working moments that they cannot sink gracefully into holiday oblivion when the merry Summer comes. The "press agents" are as busy manufacturing Summer resorts and "palatial homes" for them during their vacation as they were at any time during the season chronicling their exploits. Years ago I used to envy those lucky actors and actresses who, reeking with success and tingling with plaudits, were able to retire for the hot months to blissful and exquisite inertia. Was there ever such a fortunate race of people? I used to ask myself. Why did men bother about trying to become millionaires, or railroad magnates, or political leaders, or statesmen, when they could be actors and enjoy so gorgeous a time?

And I used to turn the pages of my dramatic record and gloatingly read such paragraphs as these:

"Miss Tottle Coughdrop, having closed a particularly brilliant season on the road, will retire to her magnificent Summer home at Mudville-on-the-Atlantic and endeavor to recover from a threatened attack of nervous prostration."

"Mr. Snuffy and his charming wife, Mrs. Snuffy, have cleared \$600,000 this season. They are undecided whether to summer on the European Continent or to take a long-needed rest on their estates at Hunter's Point. Their next season opens in September."

"Mr. Scroggins, the talented young juvenile, will camp out during the Summer and finish sixteen new plays, all of which he has sold. He will, furthermore, consider eighty-five offers to star that have been made by the most reputable managers of London, Paris and New York."

"Miss Pinkham's superb efforts as the heroine of 'The Boy Mother; or, The Maniac Tramp,' must end next week. She is going to London to rest, although it is quite possible that she will hire the Lyceum Theatre, or Her Majesty's, and play a short season abroad. This depends absolutely upon the condition of her health."

"The well-known star, Rory O'Clambake, will visit his ancestral home, near Limerick, Ireland. The villagers are already preparing to give a royal reception to the famous American who cleared \$1,000,000 last season on the one-night stands."

"Mauger Fly-by-Night will cruise about the Summer resorts on his yacht and endeavor to brace himself up. He has had a most successful season, and is duly elated."

"The Kadps Sisters ended their marvellously successful tour at Redbank, N. J., last night, in order to be able to sail for London to-day and take part in the Queen's Jubilee. The Prince of Wales, after having heard of their ovation at Cannajoharie, N. Y., expressed a fervent desire to meet them. The Kadps Sisters are most democratic, and at first refused to listen to His Royal Highness's letter. Their next season will open at Prairie Du Chien, Wis."

"The eminent tragedienne, Lucia di Spil-fire, fainted last night and announced her inability to continue the performance. She will go to the family chateau, near West Brighton, Coney Island, this morning. Her stateroom on the Iron steamboat is already a flower garden. The popularity of this intellectual actress is undimmed."

The first dawn of my disenchantment came in this way: I wanted to see a well-known actress about some plans that she was obliged to be making for a new season. I went to her business manager and asked for her address. "Very sorry," he said, "but Miss Blank is at her Summer home, Bonny-View-on-the-Hudson. She has gone there to recuperate." I informed him that a Hudson River resort could not be so very inaccessible. I'd go there and interview the lady comfortably. He hem'd and ha'd. Miss Blank would not care to be disturbed. I must really excuse her. Still I persisted, and after having caused him to believe that my business was of vital consequence to the lady, he let me



IN THE SUN.

What She Says She's Going to Do.

light-heartedly engaged in enjoying themselves, remain in the city in dingy rooms near Sixth avenue. What they do do under such circumstances is to keep off Broadway for six or seven days at a time, and then visit it wearing tan shoes, a sea-shore costume and a tan grease paint face.

"Just come into the city for an hour or two," the actor will say. "Frohman sent for me. He has a great part that only I can possibly play. If it hadn't been for that I would have ignored his letter. I'm resting. I need rest, and don't want to be disturbed."

And very probably he has written a pathetic letter to Frohman begging him for something to do next season, even if it be super work at \$15 per week.

This sort of procedure is always effective. Every actor knows the real truth of his associates' presence on the Rialto, but there is a kind of brotherhood about the arrangement that lends to it a certain charm. The miserably candid people—there are a few—who admit that they are eating out their hearts in the baking city, receive little sympathy. Nobody cares to hear tales of woe. They strike home too frequently and they can do no good. A good many actors act a great deal more during the Summer than they are able to do during the Winter. They play at the Summer resort comedy so realistically that sometimes I wonder why managers don't buttonhole them for starring tours.

The most amusing stories are the dazzling episodes anent European glories that reach New York. Some actors really go to Europe, which isn't at all difficult or expensive to reach nowadays, although it has the reputation of being both. You hear of these actors as "visiting Henry Arthur Jones or Arthur W. Pinero at their homes," as "lunching with Sardou and submitting to him ideas for new plays," of "appearing at drawing rooms" and securing affable smiles from the Prince and Princess of Wales, and of "running over to Monte Carlo for a day" and breaking the bank.

Those of us who do London in the Summer know how vastly ridiculous all this is. You see the American actor, cursing himself for being in a place where he can't say "How d'ye do" every five minutes, because nobody knows him, and sitting on a drab chair in Low's Exchange eagerly devouring American papers two weeks old. You note the wistful look in his eyes, which only vanishes when he comes across a paragraph about himself telling of his European whirl. You watch him as he reads that has been hobnobbing with Sir Henry Irving and refusing offers from Beerholm Tree, and a real tide of pathos sweeps into your heart. There he is, poor actor, seated on his drab chair, counting the days until the boat goes back, and wondering if he will have enough money to keep him until then at the penny coffee houses or poverty-stricken "bread companies." The American actor in London is a piteous sight, and the American actress is pitouiser. She is quite out of her element. She is completely lost. She looks "fakey" and unhappy, and she is dreadfully oppressed by an exorbitant landlady. Yet she writes to the dramatic papers in this strain: "Am having a perfectly delightful time. What with dinners, teas, lunches and five-o'clocks, I can scarcely call a moment my own. I have seen everything in London worth seeing. The managers have been most kind and have placed boxes at my disposal every night. They are charming people, are the English, although America is quite good enough for me. I have had such tempting offers to stay here and create new parts in plays by Jones and Pinero that I assure you it has required all my will power to return to America. I shall come back, because I do not wish to see my poor actors out of employment. I have purchased some magnificent dresses and have secured a dozen or so of new plays by leading playwrights."

Yes, the actor's vacation is all a delightful farce-comedy. The palatial homes "built out of the proceeds of last season's success," generally turn out to be \$8 per week boarding houses, where the butter is rancid and the flies positively melodramatic. The princely yachts are tugboats hired for the occasion, and the crowd of guests so regally entertained are fellow victims in boarding house misery.

It all sounds like a whirl of unmitigated luxury, with everything so carefully arranged that there is no loophole for ennu or doubt or discomfiture. The object is, of course, to saturate the public with the idea that theatres can get along very well without them (during the Summer), and when the next season opens to appear as though fresh and invigorated by months of delightful inertia. When actors and actresses can Summer as they say they do, the golden age will be with us.

My own idea is that if actors simply "dropped out" when the season died, and told the public to go hang itself (mentally, of course), nobody would lose anything and the actors themselves would feel better satisfied. That condition of things may come later. In the meantime, the actors are beginning to Summer as ostentatiously as ever.

ALAN DALE.

IN THE SHADOW.

What She Really Does.

Into the secret.

I saw her. She was, as a matter of fact, at Bonny-View-on-the-Hudson. Bonny-on-the-Hudson turned out to be a four-roomed flat on Tenth avenue, with a kitchen view of the Hudson River. Miss Blank wore a cotton wrapper and was scrambling eggs in a saucepan. I was horrified, for I had heard that she had intended to devote her entire Summer to study. I did stop to reflect that women may study and still scramble eggs. It all struck me as being horribly kiff-kiff.

After that the truth came upon me in torrents, and after I had haunted the Rialto for a year, I knew all its ways by heart. A good many of the actors who are announced in the dramatic papers as being



"What They Do Is to Keep Off Broadway for Six Days and Then Visit It Wearing Tan Shoes and a Tan Grease Paint Face."